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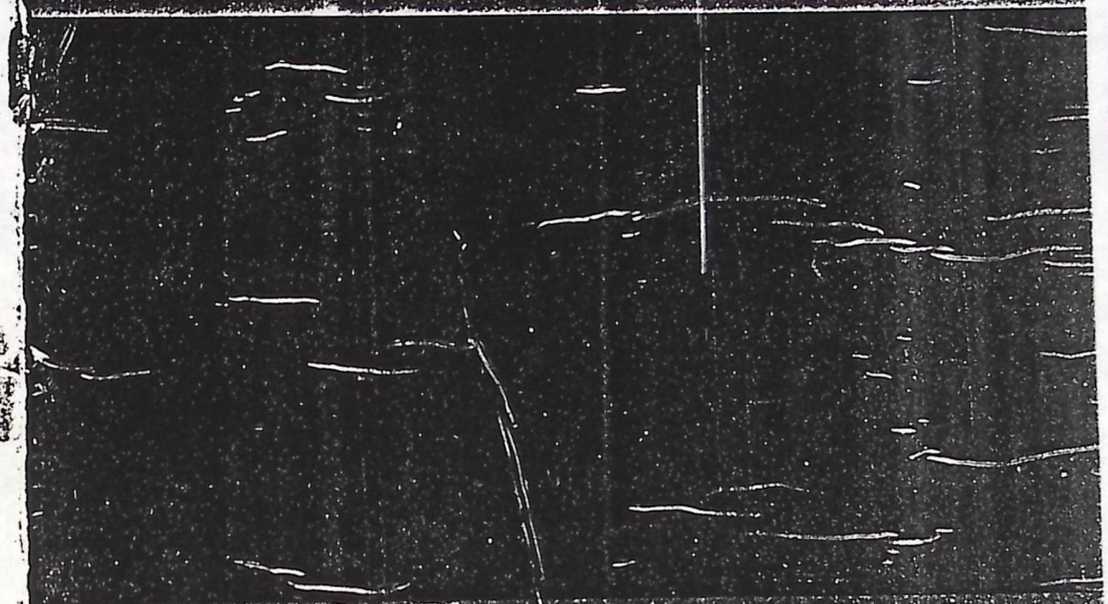
NEW YORK 3 FREEDOM CAMPAIGN
P. O. BOX 16
JAMAICA. NEW YORK 11432

PRISONERS OF WAR



THE CASE OF THE NEW YORK THREE

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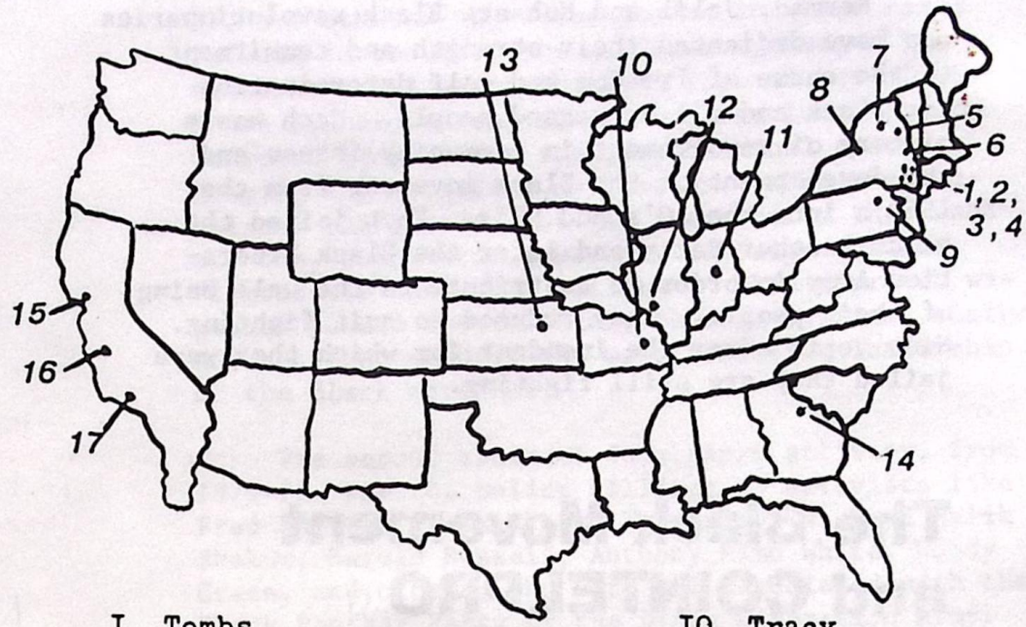

I. Tombs
2. Rikers Island
3. Metropolitan Correctional Facility
4. Sing Sing
5. Dannemora
6. Greenhaven
7. Auburn
8. Attica
9. Lewisburg
IO. Tracy
II. Terre Haute
I2. Marion
I3. Leavenworth
I4. Atlanta
I5. San Quentin
I6. Folsom
I7. Vacaville

HERMAN BELL, ANTHONY (JALIL MUNTAQIM) BOTTOM and ALBERT (NUH) WASHINGTON are currently serving twenty-five years to life in three of the maximum security prisons shown above. Over the last nine years they have spent time in all of these penal institutions. They have been held in isolation for long periods in special housing units. Their families and visitors have been harassed. Their lives have been threatened.

Who are these three?
Why are they being treated like this by the U.S. government?
Why do they call themselves prisoners of war?

Herman, Jalil and Nuh are Black revolutionaries who have dedicated their strength and commitment to the cause of freedom and self determination for Black and all oppressed people. Each has a history of involvement in community issues and the development of the Black movement from the 1960's into the 70's and 80's. Each joined the Black Panther Party and later the Black Liberation Army in order to contribute to the well being of their people. They refused to quit fighting. Nine years after the incident for which they were jailed they are still fighting.

The Black Movement and COINTELPRO

The case for which the three are jailed can only be understood in the context of the late 60's and early 70's. It was in the decade of the 60's that U.S. imperialism began to be challenged successfully both abroad and at home. Vietnam was winning its independence from U.S. domination; in Africa and Latin America liberation movements were beginning to expose the true nature of this government and to struggle against it.

Inside the U.S., Black people were organizing on a large scale to continue their fight to overturn 400 years of racist repression. U.S. capitalism had been built on the back of African slave labor and the development of U.S. world domination had depended ever since on the subjugation of Black people. Black people have known this, and there have always been those who have organized among their people to end this enslavement. The government too has understood that its power depends on oppressing Black people in this country. Thus, in the 60's it did not stand passively by with the resurgence of the Black nationalist movement.

The U.S. instituted a program of domestic counterinsurgency known as COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program). In a memo dated April 25, 1967, F.B.I. director J. Herbert Hoover stated:

> The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of Black Nationalist hate type organizations and groupings, and the leadership, spokesmen, membership and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder.

In March 1968 Hoover elaborated on the Cointelpro goals to:

> ...prevent militant Black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability, by discrediting them to three separate segments of the community... the 'responsible' Negro community, the white community and liberals, Negro radicals.

It was, in other words, an offensive program to sabotage the growing movement for human rights and self-determination for Black people. And as such, the government was ready to use every means at its disposal - including the breaking up of homes, dismantling organizations, pitting one Black group against another to the extent of having agents infiltrate one group and murder members of another group, framing community leaders on criminal charges and then imprisoning them. The murders of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and El Haj Malik Shabazz (Malcolm X) were all part of the Cointelpro operations.

From 1968 to 1971 much of the government's efforts went into the general, all inclusive indictments of leaders of the Black movement. There was the New Haven Panther conspiracy case against Erika Huggins and Bobby Seale, the New York Panther

EL-HAJ MALIK SHABAZZ

(MALCOLM X)

21, and others. When the juries in these cases refused to convict, the government changed tactics and still using the same type of brutal violence by the federal agents and the local police targeted leaders for specific criminal charges, denying any political motivation. When the conspiracy charges did not get the results they wanted, they instituted a massive campaign against "terrorists" and "cop killers". This approach was geared toward neutralizing, through criminal charges and outright murder, the most effective leadership of the Black movement.

The second stage of Cointelpro activity, from 1971-75, saw the police killings of activists like Fred Hampton, Mark Clark, Twymon Myers, Zayd Malik Shakur, Harold Russell, Anthony Kimu White, Woody Green, and others, who were all associated with the Black Panther Party or the Black Liberation Army. Many more were charged and convicted, including Elmer Geronimo Pratt, Sundiata Acoli, Henry Sha Sha Brown, Richard Dhoruba Moore, Bernice Safiyah Jones, and Assata Shakur.* (See appendix for the summary of these cases.) It is in this context that we must look at the case of Herman, Jalil and Nuh.

Newkill and the Case of the New York Five

On May 21, 1971, two New York City policemen, Waverly Jones and Joseph Piagentini, were killed at a Harlem housing project. On August 28, Nuh and Jalil were arrested in San Francisco and

*On November 2, 1979, Assata escaped from Clinton Correctional Institution for Women in New Jersey.

through supposed identification of a weapon and a very tentative line-up identification, were charged with the New York killings. Herman was later added to those charged, as were Gabriel and Francisco Torres (who much later had the charges dismissed against them in this case by the Judge in the second trial). The government mounted a massive campaign to characterize the five as "wanton copkillers", "terrorists", "Black hate-mongers". What we now know is that, like many others serving life terms in the nation's prisons - like Henry Sha Sha Brown, Richard Dhoruba Moore - they were targets of Cointelpro. The particular Cointelpro campaign which targeted those responsible for the shooting of the New York City police officers, was named "Newkill". In the memos reprinted here, it is shown that this was not merely another criminal trial. The government was involved all the way to the White House of Richard Nixon, John Erlichman and other Watergaters.

It should therefore be no surprise to learn that the government used bribery, threats, illegal extraditions, imprisonment and torture to make someone pay for the deaths of the two police officers in this case. Outstanding prosecution tactics included the following:

1. Abuse of women: three women witnesses, one of whom was the wife of one of the defendants, were threatened that if they did not cooperate their children would be taken away. Two of those women were jailed for one and a half years, and finally testified for the prosecution.

2. Electric cattleprod torture: one witness, arrested in New Orleans on another charge, was tortured with an electric cattleprod. He told the judge in chambers that the gun that had been identified as one of the murder weapons and that had been attributed to Herman, was in fact his own. This contradiction never

SAC, Albany

August 25, 1967

Director, FBI

PERSONAL ATTENTION TO ALL OFFICES

1 - Mr. C. D. Brennan
1 -
1 -
1 -
1 -
1 -

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM
BLACK NATIONALIST - HATE GROUPS
INTERNAL SECURITY

Offices receiving copies of this letter are instructed to immediately establish a control file, captioned as above, and to assign responsibility for following and coordinating this new counterintelligence program to an experienced and imaginative Special Agent well versed in investigations relating to black nationalist, hate-type organizations. The field office control file used under this program may be maintained in a pending inactive status until such time as a specific operation or technique is placed under consideration for implementation.

The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder. The activities of all such groups of intelligence interest to this Bureau must be followed on a continuous basis so we will be in a position to promptly take advantage of all opportunities for counterintelligence and to inspire action in instances where circumstances warrant. The pernicious background of such groups, their duplicity, and devious maneuvers must be exposed to public scrutiny where such publicity will have a neutralizing effect. Efforts of the various groups

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2 - New York
2 - Philadelphia
2 - Phoenix
2 - Pittsburgh
2 - Richmond
2 - St. Louis
2 - San Francisco
2 - Washington Field Office

AUG 29 1967

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE.

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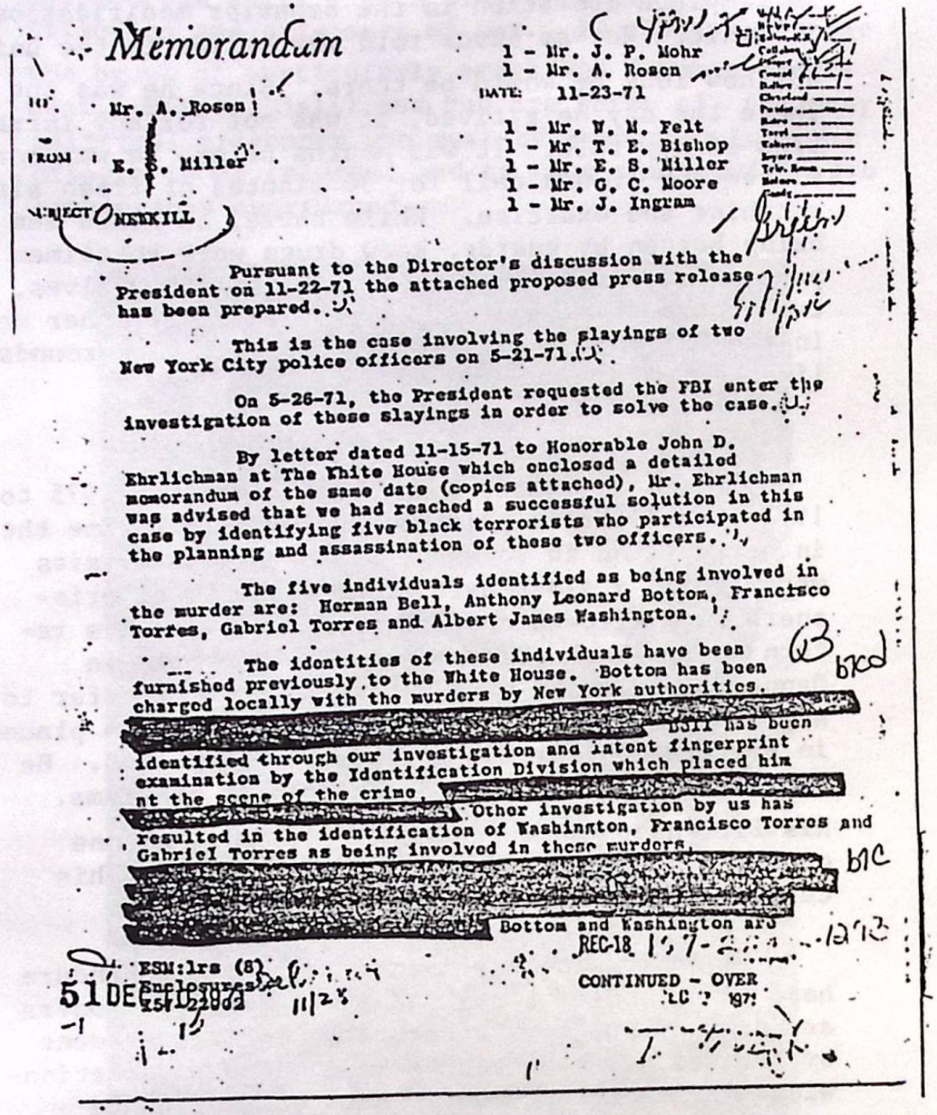

Memorandum

TO: Mr. A. Rosen

FROM: E. S. Miller

SUBJECT: ONEKILL

1 - Mr. J. P. Mohr
1 - Mr. A. Rosen
DATE: 11-23-71
1 - Mr. W. M. Felt
1 - Mr. T. E. Bishop
1 - Mr. E. S. Miller
1 - Mr. G. C. Moore
1 - Mr. J. Ingram

Pursuant to the Director's discussion with the President on 11-22-71 the attached proposed press release has been prepared.

This is the case involving the slayings of two New York City police officers on 5-21-71.

On 5-26-71, the President requested the FBI enter the investigation of these slayings in order to solve the case.

By letter dated 11-15-71 to Honorable John D. Ehrlichman at The White House which enclosed a detailed memorandum of the same date (copies attached), Mr. Ehrlichman was advised that we had reached a successful solution in this case by identifying five black terrorists who participated in the planning and assassination of these two officers.

The five individuals identified as being involved in the murder are: Herman Bell, Anthony Leonard Bottom, Francisco Torres, Gabriel Torres and Albert James Washington.

The identities of these individuals have been furnished previously to the White House. Bottom has been charged locally with the murders by New York authorities.

[redacted] Bell has been identified through our investigation and latent fingerprint examination by the Identification Division which placed him at the scene of the crime. [redacted] Other investigation by us has resulted in the identification of Washington, Francisco Torres and Gabriel Torres as being involved in these murders.

[redacted] Bottom and Washington are

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Enclosures

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CONTINUED - OVER

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came out in court. The witness has since recanted his testimony.

3. Questionable identifications: New York police made a positive identification of Herman's finger prints five days before they arrested him. His fingerprints were then substituted for those that they found on a car near the scene of the killings.

   No line-up or photo spread was ever held for Herman.

   No one identified Nuh at the San Francisco line-up. At the same line-up, one witness identified Jalil, but another said that he was definitely not the man she had seen. Three others picked other men out of the line.

   A fingerprint connected to the case was identified as belonging to another man. The judge took a statement from the D.A. in chambers, but the defense never saw either the fingerprints or the D.A.'s statement.

4. Juror harassment: one of the jurors in the second trial received threatening phone calls and hired his own bodyguards. He told no one any of this until the trial was over.

5. No admission of Cointelpro evidence: the judge took a statement from the F.B.I. about the illegal wiretaps and other surveillance. The defense never saw the statement nor had access to this evidence.

Even with all this, and with the simultaneous heavy and hostile media campaign (which led to the writing of three books*), the first trial ended in

*"Chief", by Albert Seedman, Chief of Detectives in New York City at the time; "Target Blue", by Robert Daley, assistant police commissioner of New York City at the time; "Badge of the Assassin" by Robert Tannenbaum, chief D.A. in the case.

a hung jury. The government needed a second trial before it could get a conviction.

On May 12, 1975, Nuh, Jalil and Herman were sentenced to 25 years to life. Now that the trial was over, the judge could put aside the government's contention that this was a regular criminal trial.

In passing sentence, he acknowledged that the three were revolutionaries engaged in a war of liberation. He stated that as prisoners of war, they must accept the heaviest penalty the state could impose.

Prisoners of War

Despite the government's denial of the existence of political prisoners or prisoners of war in this country, Nuh, Jalil and Herman have been singled out for special treatment -- special abuse -- in all the institutions where they have been incarcerated since their arrests.

The judge made their life sentences run consecutively to time that they had to serve in other jurisdictions. When Jalil returned to prison in California, he was placed in the notorious "Adjustment Center" and "Management Control Unit" at San Quentin. He contracted tuberculosis there and almost died. Since his return to New York in 1977, he spent 60 days in isolation in Attica; he was transferred from Clinton/Dannemora to Attica, from Attica to Auburn, from Auburn to Greenhaven, and lastly to Comstock - each time for his ongoing activities among prisoners. At Greenhaven, he was singled out by the Commissioner of Corrections as leader of a strike, and as a result was beaten by six guards before being transferred to Downstate and then Comstock.

Herman was taken from New York to federal prison in Marion, Illinois. Marion is the prison built to replace Alcatraz and is known across the country as the "end of the line" in the federal penitentiary system. For 16 months, he was kept in complete isolation in the behavior modification "H" unit. He was never told why he was in the unit nor how long he would be there. Since he was put there the day he arrived, it was not for any infraction of any rule. It was months before he was permitted out of his cell for 30 minutes of fresh air, sunshine and exercise. While there, he heard men being beaten by guards, knew drugs were sometimes put in his food; three prisoners hung themselves, two others died "mysteriously." The only other men in the "H" unit had political activist backgrounds like Herman.

Nuh, like Jalil, spent the years from 1975 to 1977 in California prisons. He spent his time there in segregation in Folsom. His occasional visits were behind a glass partition, while other prisoners were allowed contact visits. Since his return to New York prisons, he has been held in Dannemora, despite many requests for a transfer to any other prison. At Dannemora, he has been placed in segregation for two periods of six months. He has been denied access to educational programs. His life has been threatened by guards; on one occasion a written death threat was left in his cell signed by the Ku Klux Klan.

Prisoners in this country all have to endure hard conditions. Black and Third World prisoners are singled out for particularly harsh treatment by the white racist guards in institutions nationwide. Prisoners there for acts of resistance

against the repressive U.S. government, those there for their role in the movement for the liberation of Black and other Third World and oppressed people, and those who have been politicized while inside and now struggle against conditions inside and outside the walls - such prisoners are political prisoners and prisoners of war. As such, they bear the brunt of particularly cruel and inhuman treatment. Herman, Jalil and Nuh are three of the many political prisoners who must be supported in their efforts to be released and to have their Cointelpro convictions overturned.

GEORGE JACKSON

Resistance and the Future

Nuh, Jalil and Herman, along with others like them, live in a state of perpetual war and daily concern for their lives. But as repression breeds resistance, and the Black movement survives and grows, so do they. Their determination and commitment to freedom grow.

It is time that we re-educate ourselves about Nuh, Herman and Jalil and tell others about them. We must learn more and tell others about the government's campaign, which continues to this day, against those who fight to bring change to this country; about those who fight for freedom. We can't sit by as the country moves to the right. We must join those who fight back. The three must have a new trial, full government revelation of their F.B.I. files, and reparations for the harm they have suffered from Cointelpro activities. Above all, they must be released from prison. They need lawyers and legal workers for these tasks. They need political support. We need to get them back into the community where they belong so that their full potential as leaders in the Black liberation movement can be realized.

To help - to work on their appeals, file Cointelpro suits, work to improve the conditions under which they are imprisoned, investigate and publicize their case, investigate and publicize the cases of other political prisoners and prisoners of war, support the amnesty campaign or help financially with all these efforts - write to:

N.Y. Three Freedom Campaign

~~[redacted] Street Apt. [redacted]~~
~~New York, New York 10025.~~

NEW YORK 3 FREEDOM CAMPAIG
P. O. BOX 16
JAMAICA, NEW YORK 11432

Statements

from the

New York Three

I was born January 14, 1948 in Benton, Mississippi, the first born of ten children. My family were sharecroppers. A few years after I was born my father and mother separated. Leaving the South was near impossible in those days, money being so scarce, and the winter months often brought tears to my Momma's eyes because there was so little food to go around. Often a man did leave his family to escape the slavish conditions with the hope that one day he'd send for them.

Plantation owners lied and cheated the field hands to keep them in debt, and it was a crime to skip from a plantation leaving a debt unpaid. The high sheriff was on constant look-out for such runaways; many did get caught and found themselves before the judge. Conviction was swift and certain. The court then hired the runaways out to any planter that was short of hands, and after serving their sentence they were returned to the plantation from which they had escaped, to work off their debt. If cheating and intimidation didn't keep the field hands in check, sterner measures were invoked, such as lynchings on the least pretext, mob-violence, and state chain gangs. Black labor power has always been the traditional economic backbone of the South.

Working from "can't see in the morning till can't see at night", we did experience awful tough times. We were cold and hungry a good deal of the time, but somehow our dear sweet Momma kept us all alive... Not until Southern agriculture became fully mechanized did the field hands make enough real money to leave the plantations. Technology made their labor unnecessary, however. But, before this came to full flower, in the summer of 1956, my father returned to us. He wanted me to live in New York with him. Momma was displeased, but my grandfather advised her to let me go. I still recall his words, "Let him go, he might be able to do something for his people one day." Leaving Momma, my brothers and sisters behind, I went to live with my father.

Adjusting to city life was very difficult, but slowly I came around. Enrolled in school on a regular basis, I found myself rubbing elbows with white students for the first time. Having a segregated background, it was impossible not to be race conscious, but I was quite ignorant of the true historical relationship of Black people with the political, economic and cultural dynamics of Amer-

ican society. My experiences in the South taught me that white folks gave orders and Black folks obeyed them; and I observed in the city that very little had changed. But in general, I found things better in the city than in the country.

It was during my sophomore year in high school, one night at home as I was watching a T.V. show, that I discovered Malcolm X, who was talking about the way Black people were being treated in America. He spoke about there not being much difference in the treatment either above or below the Mason-Dixon line. Words such as this I had never heard said to white folks before, especially to their face. Thereafter, I diligently read all his speeches that I could get hold of; I followed his career. For Malcolm's words moved me to check out much of what he was saying and I discovered eye-opening information relative to Afro-American and African history.

I was never a brain in school, but I developed into a very talented football star. This led me to Oakland, California on a football scholarship in 1967, after I graduated from high school and where in short order I made acquaintance with the Black Panther Party. At the time, the Party was riding a high tide of success. Chapters were springing up everywhere across the country. Having participated in the civil rights demonstrations in New York City, and witnessed the massive destruction of major metropolitan cities sparked off by oppression, frustration and long, hot summers and cold winters, I perceived the Party as a natural but controlled response to the deteriorating conditions in our society. The existence of the Party was the cause for celebration for grass roots people.

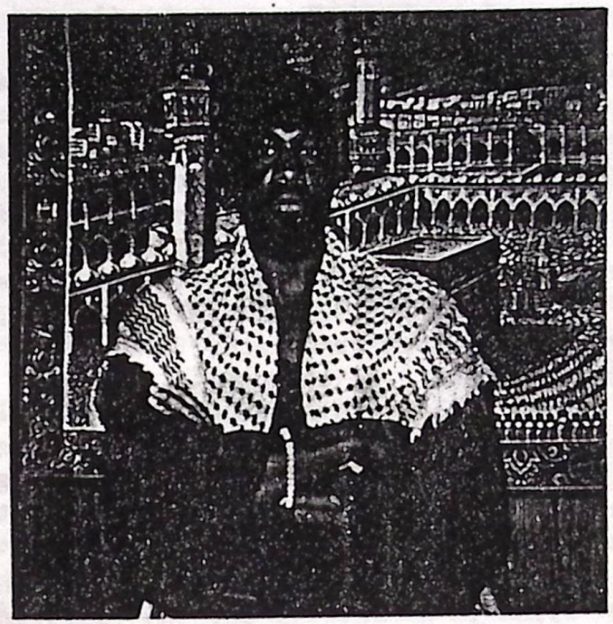
Organized and directed by young progressive Blacks, advocating community control and community self defense, so as to improve, educate, and advance the material conditions of the poor. I left school

and submerged myself in community work and in party programs as an active party member. But little did any of us young idealists know that an irresistible force of rank opportunism and state repression was firming up to smash a considerable portion of work that had been begun when the first slaves were brought to the shores of North America in chains, and out of which emerged a more seasoned, better experienced, dedicated people to fit the pieces together again. The Black Liberation Army was born. We traversed troubled America, your home and our home, working to make better that which was ruthlessly destroyed by the orders of a few rich and privileged people who refuse to concede that their political and economic system is a thing of the past.

And as a direct consequence of fighting for freedom to build an equitable and free social order based upon respect and human decency, where all may enjoy the fruits of their labor and the life that nature has generously bestowed upon us, I and many of my comrades have been committed to life in prison by the State of New York, for allegedly assassinating policemen and other such acts against the State. Your help is urgently needed to right this wrong and to set us free.

Herman Bell
#79C-262
Box B
Dannemora, New York I2929

ANTHONY (JALIL MUNTAQIM) BOTTOM



I was born October 18, 1951 in Oakland, California, the first of four children in my family. I attended elementary school in San Francisco, high school and one year of college in San Jose. My political development began at an early age, when I participated in two street riots in San Francisco in 1964 and 1966. During my high school years, I became an organizer of the Black Student Union for my school district, often touring on speaking engagements with B.S.U. leaders of San Jose city and state colleges. At this time, I was an active

mention the many city jails in both states. Then in 1976 Sundiata Acoli and I launched a national campaign to petition the United Nations concerning the violations of international law pertaining to the U.S. penal system and the existence of political prisoners of war in U.S. prisons. (See U.N. document E/CN.4 Sub.2/NGO/75). The U.N. prisoners' petition campaign was a tactical initiative to revitalize the political development of the prison movement, and to construct the National Prisoners Organization. In early 1977, in concert with political prisoners in Illinois, New York, New Jersey and California, a booklet was issued entitled "National Strategy of Political Prisoners Revolutionary Solidarity Movement," the organizing document for the N.P.O.; later in the same year, I issued a sequel to the document, "United Front of PPRSM," which provided the means to support the prison movement. At present I am the national coordinator of the NPO/UF of PPRSM, a prisoner organization with cadre and affiliates in seventeen states across the country.

Recently, I wrote a pamphlet entitled "A Case Against U.S. Domestic (neo)Colonialism for the Prisoner of War Amnesty Campaign;" this is the organizing document to build the National POW Amnesty Campaign. I also issued a 1980 Report on the NPO/UF of PPRSM, that depicts concerns of the NPO, i.e., amnesty campaign, repeal of the thirteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the establishment of the National POW Defense Fund, and the current development of "Arm the Spirit", a revolutionary prisoners' publication I helped create before being paroled from San Quentin prison.

At the age of 29, with 9 years in prison, I have become much more aware, determined to continue to fight for the national liberation of Africans in America, organizing the unorganized, forging unity under the principles of revolutionary nationalism and internationalism within the entire class and national liberation struggle in North America.

My prison activism also consists of writing articles and pamphlets, organizing prisoners in every prison I'm in, and filing suits against dehumanizing prison conditions. I have also filed a Court action (habeas corpus) in an effort to be released, plus another which brings to Court allegations that I am being illegally confined in New York prisons, stating the New York police authorities violated Federal statutes on extradition and the interstate agreement on detainers.

This brief autobiography only presents a fraction of my personal and political history. Like many political prisoners, I have a family -- in my case a daughter with whom I am out of touch because of the long years' imprisonment. I have suffered many indignities and inhuman prison conditions. I have been placed in segregation for years at a time, and nearly died of tuberculosis in 1977 while I was at San Quentin. I have been set up several times to be killed by prison officers, and am presently held in segregation for allegedly organizing successful labor and hunger strikes, which resulted in two prison officers being fired from their posts for corruption.

In 1979 while in prison in Auburn, I wrote a book entitled "For the Liberation of North America," which is being distributed to raise funds for the campaign of the NPO/UF of PPRSM.

It is my belief that this effort to "Free the New York 3", will eventually build toward a national movement and campaign to liberate many more political prisoners and P.O.W.'s in North American prisons. Such campaigns have met some success in various progressive and reactionary countries. For example, East Germany marked its 30th anniversary with the release of hundreds of political dissidents; in the Philippines some 2,307 political prisoners and P.O.W.'s were granted amnesty in 1979 in what was termed a step toward 'national unity'; a similar amnesty in Spain freed Basque Nationalists;

amnesties have also been won in Portugal and Chile as a result of national campaigns in support of political prisoners of war with international assistance. Most recently Premier Fidel Castro has released and sent abroad many of Cuba's political dissidents, and the United States has made several prisoners' exchanges with Mexico, Cuba and Russia.

Therefore, this effort to "Free the New York 3" can be a cornerstone in building a national amnesty campaign to liberate all political prisoners and P.O.W.'s in the U.S. penal system.

For more information on the NPO/UF of PPRSM and the National P.O.W. Amnesty Campaign write:

Jalil Abdul Muntaqim
Nat. Coord. Of NPO/UF of PPRSM
P.O. Box 736 Cathedral Station
New York, N.Y. 10025

Financial contributions for NPO/UF of PPRSM campaign large or small should be sent to:

National P.O.W. Defense Fund
Bank of America
Ninth & Market St. Branch
1301 Market Street
San Francisco, Ca. 94103 (Act. 02927-02489)

Anthony Bottom
77A-4283
135 State St.
Auburn, N.Y. 13022

ALBERT (NUH) WASHINGTON

Let me begin by saying that I am an African political prisoner of war. Why I call myself this is because I am a descendant of African slaves -- rather Africans who were enslaved. Slavery and cultural imperialism on the part of the white ruling class to a great extent destroyed our (Africans living in America) links with our motherland. So the liberation struggle is fought on many different levels -- politically, militarily, economically and culturally. To recognize that one is an African descendant is to a degree to reforge the historical links, if in nothing else, the spirit.

Marcus Garvey said, "Africa for Africans at home and abroad." It is also a way of resisting on whatever level is feasible, yet we have only to look at other people in this country to see that they maintain their national ties; so should people of African heritage. I am a political prisoner because of my political views. I am an advocate of political autonomy of African people; while at the same time recognizing the class nature of American society, I advocate class struggle for the political and economic liberation of the working class from exploitation.

I am a prisoner of war because the aggressive nature of American imperialism towards Africans born here in the U.S. is antagonistic to the point that a state of war exists between the African People (and we do comprise a nation of people) and the racist reactionary American government. One has only to look at the continuous murders of African men, women and children by the state agents (police) to see that violence is a state policy. The act of resistance constitutes an act of war against aggression; I am imprisoned for resisting; therefore, I am a prisoner of war.

I was my parents' second born and the first to survive -- the year 1941 in New York City. My mother and father always worked, so they were able to provide for my brother and myself. The schools I went to were such that I never learned to read in them. Reading was taught to me by my mother, and it opened a new world to me.

Coming up in New York during the 50's was a time of gangs, and it was then I first came in contact with police racism. Some of the members of the gang I belonged to were attacked by a gang of whites. A few of us went to retaliate and in the process we were captured and beaten for hours in the precinct. All the while we were being called such names as 'niggers' and 'black degenerates.' I still remember the name of the first cop to ever hit me, and it has been over twenty-five years. It was only during this period that I was exposed to Black nationalism in the form of the Nation of Islam. It wasn't uncommon to hear of lynching then, which was very disturbing to the Black family, especially the male child who was the target. Years later I learned the female was also a target -- a victim of being black, female, and powerless in this society. My first arrest led to incarceration in the youth house for boys, and from there to Rockland State Hospital. I was considered paranoid for thinking society was trying to repress me. In a San Francisco courtroom years later, a doctor said my response was normal, given the racist nature of the society. I was in the hospital from 1957 to 1960.

Upon my release, I found the gangs had been destroyed by heroin. It was easy to fall in to drugs; dope was plentiful on the streets of Harlem -- bars and drugs, the easy escape from oppression. After a few years I just quit and started back into the nationalist movement.

It was in Colorado that I became aware of the Black Panther Party and on my return to Denver made contacts, and my politics developed along Marxist-Leninist lines. While I still recognized the racism in American society, I learned to recognize the rigid class system and the exploitativeness of it towards people from other ethnic groups. The more I learned, the more determined I became to aid in bringing about a qualitative change.

Terrorism has become a word to identify activity by the people called terrorists. The popular usage by the government agencies or established media is to instill in the masses that terrorists are dangerous to them, that is, the people. Yet if we look at the history of the Black Liberation Army (BLA), who of the people can say that they terrorize them, be they Black or white people? Police agencies put the terrorist label on the BLA as a method to isolate and to justify terrorism by the state against the Black population.

The BLA is the fist to beat the enemies of the people One of the rules of the Black Panther Party was that members of the party could not belong to any other mili-

tary organization but the BLA. The BLA didn't come into existence by a command, but out of historical necessity. The BPP was defensive in nature; it was designed to educate on a mass level, and to articulate the political aspirations of the people. It was while doing this that the police repression -- outright terrorism -- was launched against the party and its supporters. The police stepped up its murder of Black youth. With this, some said it was time for Black Liberation Army; others said no. The party split and within one faction there developed a political and military wing which was called the BLA. In their zeal to crush the military within the Black community, the police unleashed a reign of terror which created resistance -- armed resistance.

There are some (on the left) who found the tactics of the BLA to be adventuristic, militaristic, etc., but history will show the tactics of the BLA to be correct in a way its critics will find it hard to fault. It's a utopian concept to think one day the whole population will be ready, mistake-free. All theories must be tested in practice. You learn from your mistakes. You try again.

For the last nine years I have been (imprisoned) in prisons across the U.S. In 1972 my comrade in arms, Anthony (Jalil) Bottom and I were sentenced to prison in California for three counts of attempted murder of a policeman and possession of a machine gun. The incident happened the day George Jackson was buried in August 1971. I was also wounded in the fire fight. I was taken to the hospital where the police took all of my clothers and placed me before an open window for seven hours without medical attention. I was x-rayed and to the amazement of the doctor and the police there were no internal injuries. Being Muslim,I said "Alhum dullah."

Jalil and I were also charged with two counts of murder of a policeman, along with our comrade Herman Bell in the state of New York. The three of us were convicted and sentenced to twenty five years to life, the sentence to run consecutively with any sentence we were serving. Jalil and I were paroled in 1977 from California and Herman was paroled from federal

prison in April 1979. He had served time for bank robbery. We are all now in New York state prisons but are separated.

The judge who sentenced us said that we were prisoners of war, and it is in the transcripts. Out of nine years of imprisonment, six and one half years have been in security housing units. The S.H.U. is a prison within a prison, where you are isolated from the general population. Only since New York state have I spent any time in general population, but I have been locked up three times on trumped up charges. The first was inciting to riot. This was when I was in reception here in Dannemora which is a concentration camp run by a racist clique which practices the art of terror in the best Nazi tradition. Anyway the frame-up was because I didn't panic; then the guards threatened my life. So they decided to take it to the next level, the notorious Unit 14 security housing unit. Things were so bad there that the government forced them to install TV cameras because of the complaints. In a way it is a joke, because those who monitor the cameras are the same who set the policy. The second time was for planning a strike and possession of a weapon -- a prison made knife. The knife charge was the only one I was guilty of, if one can assume guilt for being prepared. Understand, my life has been threatened, and I am an advocate of resistance. This is in theory as well as in practice. So when I find KKK threats in my cell, it brings to mind a slogan we had back in the '60s "Arm yourself or harm yourself." I'd prefer to be armed when aggression rears its head so as to be in a position to take it. The Qu'ran says, "We set one people to check another people, if we did not, surely there would be mischief in the earth." Which means that you cannot hope that those who aggress upon you will stop if you offer no resistance. In fact, it's what they want. In the words of Malcolm X, "They don't want you to stop suffering, just suffer peacefully."

My last lock-up came in June 1979 for possession of an explosive device. I had just been elected president of the prison chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. and was well respected in the population. I was also an official within the Sunni Muslim community and was tightening up on the lax discipline and helping brothers to resolve their problems. The deputy warden said that he wouldn't tolerate me being president. He even went so far as to make deals with other prisoners. Unfortunately for him, this didn't produce what he wanted.

What really shook them up was when R. Dhoruba Moore, a close comrade, was transferred here because of political activity in Greenhaven prison and because of pressure from police agents to isolate certain BLA members. So a bomb was planted under my mattress, and they gave me six months in the security housing unit.

The central office in Albany has refused to transfer me even with the support of people writing letters complaining of the terrorism being employed against me. The central office even went so far as to lie to a visitor of mine when she complained of her harassment. The censorship of my reading material pertaining to the Black experience is blatantly racist. And then my mail is censored; in fact, a lot of it never reaches me. We are in the process of getting files from the government, both federal and state. Most of it has been withheld, and we are taking them to court so as to have access to the whole file. After nine years of imprisonment we are still targets of alleged investigations and dirty tricks, physical as well as psychological assaults. We need the support of people in many areas, especially in our court battles for our files and appeals.

I do not like the word appeal, but it is a term we will use for now. Our imprisonment is illegal. That is the ultimate basis for our

appeal, but our real appeal is to all progressive forces and human rights proponents to aid us as the struggle for African liberation is also a struggle for human rights, political and economic freedom, for all people, regardless of race, sex or class.

In closing, I'd like to say that it's hard to tell about an on-going process, because the individual adapts to survive, and much of what happens to me as well as my comrades is so incredible many would find it hard to believe. I've been flown across this country in chains three times on commercial airlines; had visits where my visitor and I were separated by glass while others had contact. I have been denied college because classes are at night and I am a maximum security prisoner; but I am already in a maximum security prison.

I, as well as Jalil, Herman, Dhoruba and others, are classified Central Monitoring Cases because of our political activity in the streets and our BLA association. Again, again I appeal (and this time the word fits) to you, the people, in aiding us.

Thank you.

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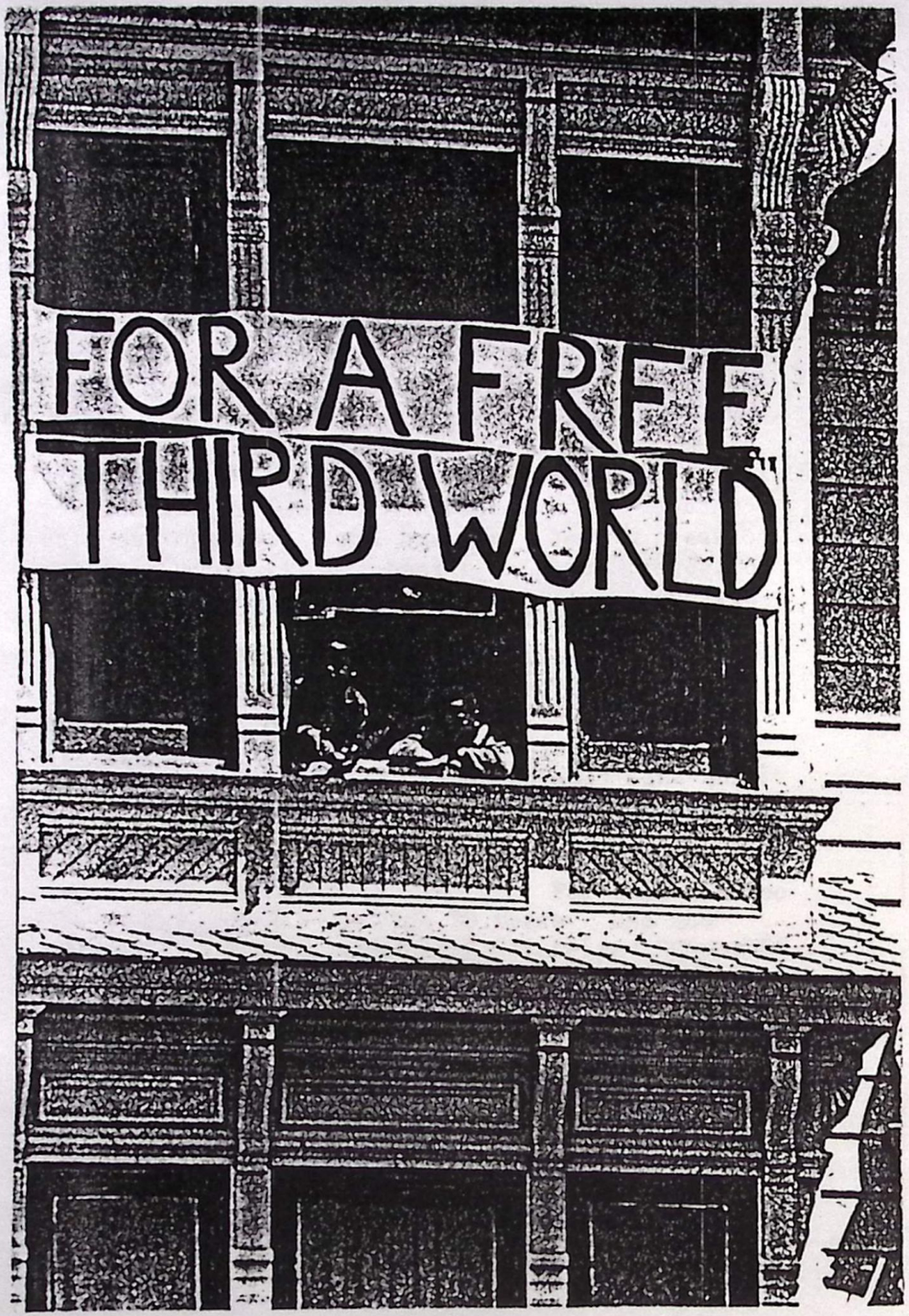

Photo: LNS

SOME OTHER POWs

TARGETS OF COINTELPRO

Elmer Geronimo Pratt was sentenced to life in prison in 1972 for the 1969 murder of a white woman in Los Angeles. FBI documents obtained seven years later revealed that an FBI informant was on his defense team, and that the FBI was surveilling Geronimo at a Black Panther Party meeting in Oakland at the time of the incident. He has a major suit against Cointelpro in the courts now.

Richard Dhoruba Moore, like the New York 3, was a target of Nixon's Newkill operation. He was one of the New York Panther 21. Shortly after the acquittal of the 21, Dhoruba was arrested and subsequently convicted of the May 19, 1971 shooting of two New York City police officers. He is now serving a sentence of twenty five years to life. He too has a major suit against Cointelpro in federal court.

Henry Sha Sha Brown was convicted in 1972 of attempted murder of police officers in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1975, he was brought to trial for the murder of police officers Foster and Laurie in New York City and was acquitted. Later that year he was convicted of bank robbery and escape. He has finished his sentence in Missouri, but now faces 20 years in federal prison on the first of these remaining charges and 3 years in New York State on the second. He too was a target of Newkill.

In 1974 Sundiata Acoli (Clark Squire) was convicted of the killing of a state trooper on the New Jersey turnpike on May 2, 1973. He was sentenced to life plus 30 years. Although he was a New Jersey state prisoner, in 1979 he was illegally "kidnapped" by U.S. authorities and sent to federal prison in Marion, Illinois.

Assata Shakur (Joanne Chesimard) was indicted in six cases of bank robbery, kidnap and murder in New York; her only conviction came from her case in New Jersey where she was a co-defendant of Sundiata. She was found guilty by an all-white jury blatantly prejudiced against her by a massive media campaign as well as a racist judge and prosecutor, and despite evidence that she was shot from behind and her hands in the air. For this she too was sentenced to life plus 30 years. She and Sundiata were both targets of Cointelpro "Chesrob" operation. On November 2, 1979 she escaped from the Clinton Correctional Institution for Women in New Jersey.

Bernice Safiyah Jones was the information officer and communications secretary of the New York Black Panther Party. In January 1975 she

was convicted with another member of the Party of the robbery of a supermarket in Norfolk, Va. One of her companions died in the incident, as did a customer of the store. She was tried and convicted in a one-day trial; her "defense" attorney turned out to have worked for the FBI and CIA. She is currently serving a 40 year sentence in Goochland, Va. Since being incarcerated, she has suffered serious medical problems, and now has a suit against the Virginia State Department of Corrections for malpractice.

*This is only a selection of political prisoners and prisoners of war in U.S. prisons. There are many more.

For more copies and/or further information writ

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